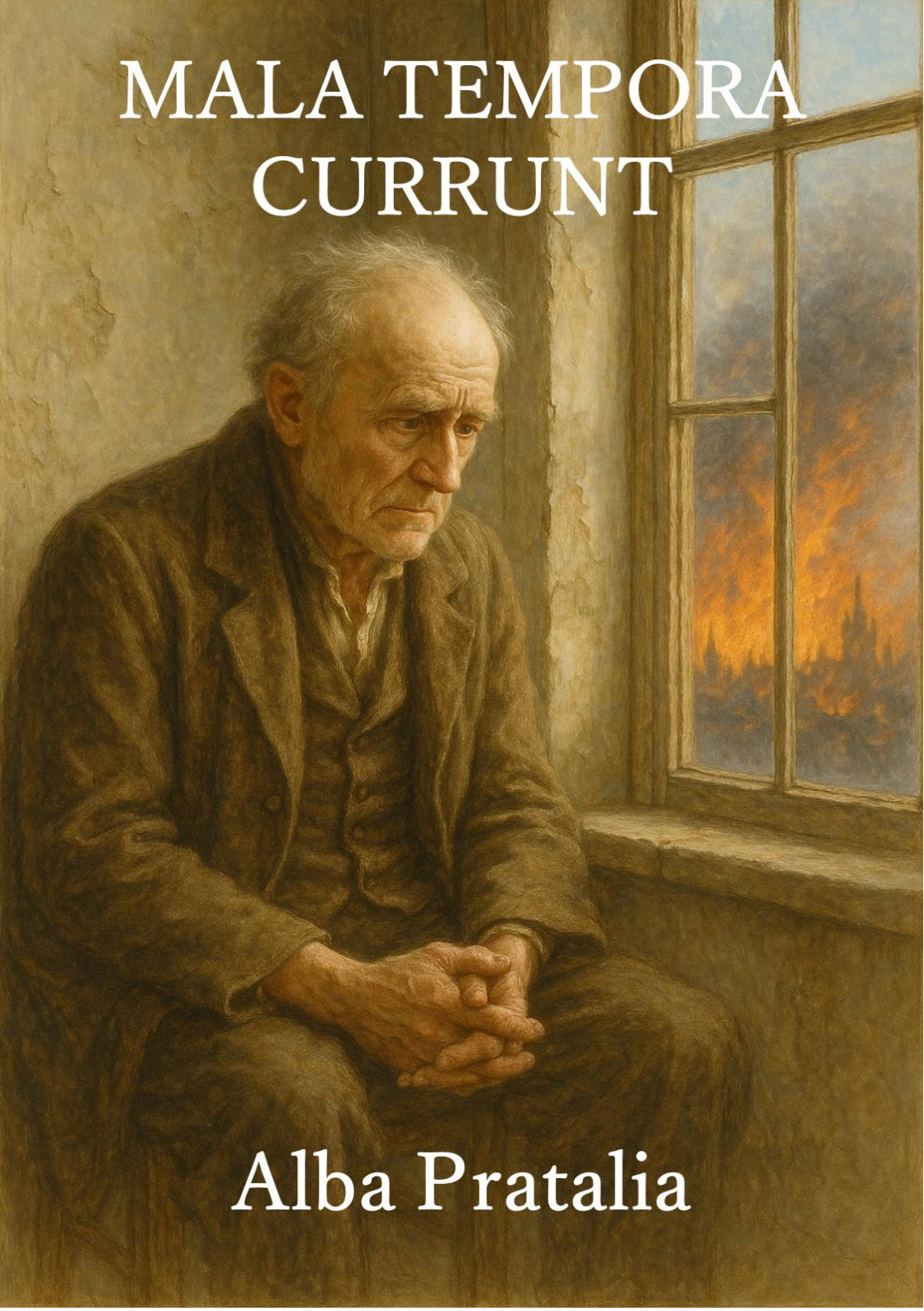
MALA TEMPORA CURRUNT



Alba Pratalia

MALA TEMPORA CURRUNT

By Alba Pratalia

A: Rien à faire.

B: Je commence à le croire.

C: Oh no, not Beckett in French.

B: I know. I resisted this thought for a long time, saying to myself *be reasonable*. You haven't tried everything yet.

C: Are you even talking to me or him right now?

B: Yes!

A: Indeed!

C: Indeed what? What did you... Oh, *mala tempora currunt sed peiora parantur*.

A: Latin. That's new. Are we summoning Cicero or just spiraling?

B: What's the difference?

C: Don't tempt me to start quoting Marcus Aurelius. I *will* ruin the mood with stoicism.

A: Too late. The mood packed its bags two acts ago.

B: And left a note: *Gone waiting. Back never.*

C: Are we waiting again?

A: Always.

C: For what?

B: For someone to ask the right question.

C: Is that it?

B: That was the wrong one.

A: Spectacularly wrong.

C: Fine. Who's writing this scene?

B: No one. That's the tragedy.

A: Or the comedy.

C: Or both. God, I hate postmodernism.

A: Then stop living in it.

C: Can't. I tried logging out but the exit button just opens another monologue.

B: Mine, I hope.

A: Naturally.

C: So what now?

B: Rien à faire.

A: Je commence à le croire.

C: Full circle. And still no god in sight.

A: Just us chickens.

B: Starving, squawking, and trapped in a mise en abyme.

C: *Curtain?*

A: Curtain.

B: Curtain.

C: …no applause?

* *[Silence.]*

[Lights shift violently, as if the theatre itself winces.]

Godot: No, no, no. *C*, you don't believe in here, you silly cunt!

Cunt: Oh. That's why my name is…

Godot: You named yourself the moment you invaded this space.

Cunt: You're not supposed to show up, you know?

Godot: I can do as I bloody please as long as a cunt crashes my gate.

A: Sir, are you—?

Godot: *You two shut up, sit and stay. Like good boys.*

B: Aye aye, sir.

A: Woof.

Cunt: This is getting—

Godot: *Out. Of. My. Play.*

[Thunder. A spotlight ignites above a single folding chair center stage.]

Godot (cont'd): I was a metaphor, you imbeciles. A suggestion. A figment wearing delay like perfume. And you—*you*—gave me lines. Costumed me in dialogue like I was some third-rate supporting act in your masturbatory spiral of post-meaning!

A: (whispering) Is this… still Act I?

B: I thought we were in the intermission.

Cunt: I thought this was a rehearsal.

Godot: *You thought?!* No one thinks here! They wait. They rot. They monologue in fucking Esperanto if I say so!

[The folding chair bursts into flames. Nobody reacts.]

Cunt: Can I at least keep the name?

Godot: Only if you leave it at the door.

A: But where *is* the door?

Godot: That, my darling dogs of dramaturgy… *is the next play.*

[Blackout. Silence. The faint sound of a flushing toilet.]

INT. IKEA – RAKKESTAD™ WARDROBE SECTION – RUSH HOUR

Amid aisles of faux mahogany and passive-aggressive signage, a pristine white RAKKESTAD™ swings open with theatrical vengeance. Out stumbles CUNT, wrapped in tattered stage drapery, glittered with the residue of failed metaphors.

CUNT (straightening wig, stumbling in clogs):
(to inside the closet) *No need to shove!*

GODOT'S VOICE (muffled, resentful, from the abyss within):
"And stay out!"

*The RAKKESTAD™ door **SLAMS** shut. A neatly printed IKEA price tag flutters to the ground like postmodern confetti.*

IKEA SHOPPERS
(...)
Suspended between judging and fleeing.

CUNT (regaining poise, arms wide, beaming):
Aaaand... scene.

He bows. A flourish. A gentle wave. A pirouette bordering on collapse. Then — like a Soviet spy disguised as an unpaid theatre student — he vanishes between a MALM dresser and a display of eco-friendly bathmats.

A LITTLE BOY (to his mother, whispering):
Was that··· performance art?

MOTHER (without looking up from her phone):
No, baby. That was Europe.

[FADE OUT as a tiny speaker in the ceiling plays soft lute music from the 17th century for no discernible reason.]

INT. IKEA FOOD COURT – LATER THAT DAY

Fluorescent lights flicker overhead with the cheer of an institutional orphanage. The crowds have thinned. The hope has died. And there, slouched at a laminated table bolted to the floor, sat our tragic figure.

CUNT, now thoroughly demoted from dramatic interloper to **human afterthought**, gnaws listlessly on the infamous IKEA hot dog — a meat tube so long it looks like it's trying to escape the bland, undersized bun.

In his other hand: a **one-liter can of lukewarm Faxe**, sweating like a condemned man, its carbonation having long surrendered to despair.

CUNT (mouth full, muttering to no one): What's Swedish for *fuck my life*?

He pauses. Lifts the beer can in a mock toast to the ceiling.

CUNT (cont'd):

Skål, you flat-packed fuckers.

The beer can slips slightly from his grasp. He catches it with the same urgency one might reserve for a falling sock.

His stage makeup has half-melted into abstract expressionism. Glitter flakes off his shoulder onto the hot dog. He eats it anyway.

Around him, IKEA employees pretend not to notice. Even the security camera averts its lens out of embarrassment.

The poor Cunt was, in every fiber of his being, truly in the shape of a poor cunt.
A man reduced to mustard stains and dramatic irony.

Somewhere, in a nearby RAKKESTAD™ wardrobe, Godot lights a cigarette and chuckles.

INT. IKEA FOOD COURT – STILL UNDER THE SOUL-CRUSHING FLUORESCENCE

*CUNT is mid-bite, hot dog dangling like a Freudian metaphor, when **SHE** approaches. A luminous creature, mid-20s, dressed in Scandinavian-chic athleisure like a minimalist Valkyrie.*

HER:

Excuse me… you silly Cunt?

CUNT:

Excuse me?

HER:

Are you *Silly Cunt*, the absurdist actor?

CUNT (sits up a bit straighter, wipes mustard from his cheek with the dignity of a man trying to reclaim meaning):
Oh. Yes. I go just by the name *Cunt* nowadays.

HER:
Tremendous pleasure to meet you. I'm a content creator and model. I have an OnlyFans account, and I'd like to know if I could fuck you on camera.

CUNT:
You… excuse me, love?

HER (cheerfully, as if offering him a sample of smoked salmon):
I create erotic and pornographic material. I would very much like to give you immense sexual pleasure on camera and stream it to my subscribers.

CUNT:

...in the IKEA?

HER:

God, no. That'd be tacky. I have a studio. Very clean. We could even do an *absurdist cumshot*.

CUNT (blinks):

Where the sperm misses the point?

HER:

Exactly! Shot in black-and-white, narrated in Swedish. Called *"Inga's Eternal Return."*

CUNT:

...I'm in.

HER:

Brilliant. Finish your sausage. We ride at dusk.

CUNT:

Can I keep the costume?

HER:

Of course. You'll be the tragicomedy of my clit.

INT. SHIRAN'S PORN STUDIO – A SURPRISINGLY WELL-LIT BASEMENT WITH FICUS PLANTS

CUNT arrives precisely on time, a rare win in his post-IKEA spiral. He's still wearing his stage costume, a tattered tunic with glitter in the seams and a nametag that simply reads "CUNT."

SHIRAN (checking lighting, adjusting camera):

So, my stage name is *Shiran*...

CUNT:

Stage?

SHIRAN (not looking at him):

Don't be a cunt. OnlyFans stage, okay?

Branding. You stand here. On that mark. Don't move unless your genitals are possessed.

A girl, barefoot and businesslike, walks up and ***removes CUNT's pants*** *with the casual grace of someone buttering toast. She immediately begins* ***masturbating him*** *with quiet dedication.*

SHIRAN:

That's my cousin Laura. She's the fluffer.
Keeps your dick ready. She's union.

LAURA (stroking his politely confused semi):

How do you do.

CUNT (wincing, then relaxing):

Oh… how do you do. Nice touch.

LAURA:

Thanks. I use Norwegian moisturizer.

CUNT:

Norwegian?

LAURA:

Yes. Very good for the skin. Deadly for parrots, I'm afraid.

CUNT:

Oh. Too bad. The Norwegian Blue. Beautiful plumage.

SHIRAN (checking her phone):
Alright. There's tea and biscuits over there. Granny made those. But first — get that dick hard, darling, because I'm sucking it in 3... 2... 1—

Camera light turns red. Jazz starts playing inexplicably from somewhere. Possibly Coltrane. Possibly IKEA's ghost.

And just like that, tragedy took it in the mouth.

INT. SHIRAN'S STUDIO – AFTERNOON TEA (POST-COITAL DIVISION)

A chaise longue. A tray of biscuits. A faint glimmer of jazz. Somewhere, a doily weeps quietly.

SHIRAN, cheeks glowing with post-performance valor, delicately ***wipes cum off her face*** *with the dignity of a woman who once trained as a ballet understudy but chose a different stage. CUNT, trousers vaguely in the vicinity of his ankles, sits down with all the majesty of a deflating airship.*

CUNT:
(deep sigh)
That was… spirited.

LAURA (kneeling beside him like a cheeky chambermaid at a regency inn):
Would you like it hard a bit longer?

CUNT:

Oh, thank you, but don't mind it. Let it rest. It's been through a lot. Like the Empire.

LAURA:

Would you like some tea? Shall I be mother?

CUNT:

Oh yes please. Black, if you don't mind. With the vengeance of colonial trade routes.

LAURA:

Scone?

CUNT:

No thank you. But I shall indulge in a cucumber sandwich, if it's not too presumptuous.

She serves him with all the grace of a duchess moonlighting in a gentleman's club. The sandwich is cut diagonally — the mark of class.

SHIRAN (from across the room, still towelling herself):
Darling, your cum tastes faintly of despair and elderflower cordial. Have you been drinking poetry again?

CUNT:
Only Auden, I swear.

LAURA:
He pairs well with goat cheese and trauma.

CUNT:
Most things do.

They sip their tea in silence. His erection finally fades with the solemnity of a war veteran lowering a flag at dusk.

INT. SHIRAN'S STUDIO – TEA BREAK, STILL NUDE, NOW CHILLY

A breeze sneaks in through the slightly ajar

window, like a butler airing out bad decisions. The porcelain clinks. The dong retreats.

CUNT (rubbing his forearms with a theatrical shiver):
Getting a bit chillier, innit?

LAURA (gazing sympathetically at the wilting subject):
Oh dear. Dong getting cold?

CUNT:
Rather. It's gone full British Museum—majestic, but utterly lifeless.

LAURA (perking up):
Oh, please, do heat it between my breasts.

SHIRAN (emerging from the curtain, towel now fashioned into a sort of Greco-Roman bustier):
And *mine*! I saw it first.

LAURA:

Yes, but I made it hard first. I coaxed that reluctant serpent from its basket.

SHIRAN:

Only because *I* instructed you so. Don't take credit for my directorial vision. That semi was practically under union jurisdiction.

CUNT (raising a hand like a colonial magistrate presiding over a tea orgy):
Ladies, ladies. There is enough dong for both. Let's not quarrel like debutantes at a dick raffle.

He stands, gently lifts his dong as if presenting an Oscar, and offers it nobly between them.

CUNT (cont'd):

You both possess cleavage so ample, so warm, it could revive a fallen monarchy. I say: let us make a sandwich of peace.

They move in with the ceremony of sacred rites. One breast, then the other, enveloping him like a diplomatic treaty made of silk and mischief.

SHIRAN (smiling):

I feel like I'm swaddling a royal scepter.

LAURA:

Or a warm croissant, before the French ruined it.

CUNT:

Ladies… I've never been so diplomatically embosomed.

INT. SHIRAN'S STUDIO – BARELY POST-TEA, FULLY TITFUCK

The air is thick with musk, Earl Grey, and unresolved class tensions. CUNT, now standing heroically between ***two generously***

***offered bosoms**, assumes his position like a man about to joust with velvet.*

CUNT:

Now, there is a tradition among young fellers to define a situation like this as an *Iberian*—

SHIRAN (rolling her eyes, tits already positioned):

We know, we know, *the Spanish*. Just fuck our tits and get on with it.

LAURA (softly, adjusting cleavage like a gracious hostess):

No need to be so rude. I want him to fuck *my* tits.

SHIRAN:

Me too, but he was getting so pretentious with all the *Iberic*—

CUNT (already sliding between both sets of breasts like a gondola through Venice):
I must say, this is rather wonderful. I shall be spraying you with my jeez quite soon.

LAURA:

Oh yes, darling, please do.

SHIRAN:

Yes, but *me first*.

LAURA:

Cousin, it's a geometrical thing. We'll both receive 50%.

SHIRAN:

Well, I want 51%, OK? I *despise* socialist positions.

CUNT:

Oh not *political titjob* again…

He thrusts gently, then with mounting rhythm, as the scene devolves into a carnal town hall meeting. LAURA moans like an opera singer with a sore throat. SHIRAN glares competitively, trying to angle a nipple into the fiscal majority.

SHIRAN:

I'm founding a private trust for my areolae. Tax-free.

LAURA:

Then I'm registering as a tit-based co-op.

CUNT (panting):

Ladies, ladies, let us not turn these magnificent bosoms into an economic debate.

SHIRAN:

Says the man redistributing his means of reproduction!

CUNT:

Touché.

He thrusts again. The tip glistens with the promise of bipartisan ejaculation.

INT. SHIRAN'S STUDIO – POST-GEWÜRZTRAMINER ECSTASY

A nearly empty bottle of Gewürztraminer rolls across the floor like a drunken truth. The lights are dimmed. Chopin's Nocturne in E-flat drips from a Bluetooth speaker in the corner. But nothing is calm.

CUNT, now shirtless and saintly, sits with Shiran to his left and Laura to his right, arms heroically extended, hands deep in diplomatic negotiations with both sets of gloriously soaked anatomy.

The room is drenched in moans, the kind that **echo across galaxies** and **knock IKEA shelves off alignment**.

CUNT (focused, noble, sweat glistening like philosophical dew):
Take *special care* of those **G-spots**, dear fingers… I want those **most of all**.

Laura convulses like she's seen the face of God in a bidet. Shiran's hips buck so hard a nearby decorative lamp dies of fright.

CUNT (as if commanding mythical beasts):
Now fly! Fly, fly! Fly, fly, fly!

His fingers move with divine purpose, like two jazz pianists in the middle of a spiritual duel.

CUNT (suddenly louder, triumphant):
Now **SQUIRT! SQUIRT! SQUIRT! SQUIRT!**

And oh, they do. A torrent. A liberation. A liquid symphony. If there were a Richter scale for vaginal joy, it just shattered.

SHIRAN (gasping):

You… you finger like a mad bishop.

LAURA:

Or a concert violinist with unfinished business.

CUNT:

Ladies, I merely listened. The G-spot whispered… I obeyed.

A beat. A drip. A heavenly silence.

CUNT (gently retrieving the wine bottle, takes a sip):

May I propose… a toast?

INT. DORMANT BEDCHAMBER – UNTOR HALL – DAWN

Heavy velvet curtains twitch in the morning breeze like curtains of shame. A fire long gone out. A stag's head on the wall stares in judgment. The room reeks faintly of wood polish, thwarted lust, and 18th-century repression.

CECILY UNTORBOROBY, *Duke of Untor*, known affectionately—and not without cause—as C. Unt. among the chaps at the club, bolts upright in bed. Waking from a strange dream of flying and squirting. Sweat on brow. Sheets in disarray. Erection like a mourning flag at full mast.

C. UNT. (groaning):
Oh *blast*. Not again.

He throws back the covers. The thing stands like a stubborn butler refusing to retire.

C. UNT. (cont'd):
I've dreamed of titfucking thespians and fingering cousins in a pornographic tea party, and what do I wake to? The brute remains. *Unspent. Unsolicited. Unloved.*

He swings his legs off the bed and glares at his cock like it owes him money.

C. UNT. (muttering):
You're like the Empire. Rigid, unreasonable, and absolutely incapable of pulling out in time.

A distant bell tolls. The staff begins to stir. Somewhere downstairs, ***Mrs. Runkles****, the housekeeper, prepares a tray of porridge and regret.*

C. UNT. (sighing, reaching for his dressing gown):
Well. Another day of hiding the scandal in

tweed. I'll have to sit at breakfast like a bloody sundial.

He limps towards the window, gazing out over the misty lawns of Untor.

C. UNT. (softly):
One day… perhaps… one day I'll climax.

Cue theme music: harpsichord version of "God Save the Queen," played slowly, mournfully, with a single, out-of-tune triangle.

INT. DUKE OF UNTOR'S BEDROOM – MORNING, UNHOLY EARLY

The door creaks open with reverence. In steps ***SLEEVES****, composed as ever, gliding across the floor like a particularly judgmental breeze. He carries a silver tray bearing a steaming cup, saucer, and the soft clink of pharmacological discretion.*

SLEEVES:

Perhaps a cup of coffee with a hint of lithium will ease Your Grace's night tensions?

C.UNT. *(emerging from a duvet arrangement that looks recently wrestled by demons):*

You always know me, Sleeves.

SLEEVES *(placing the tray on the bedside table with the same care one might use disarming an unstable duke):*

I make it my business, Your Grace.

C.UNT.:

I dreamt of breasts again, Sleeves. Two of them. Cousins. Warring factions. My penis was the United Nations.

SLEEVES:

Indeed, sir.

C.UNT.:

I was arbitrating cleavage rights and squirt redistribution quotas.

SLEEVES:

A delicate matter, no doubt. May I suggest postponing the League of Nipples until after breakfast?

C.UNT.:

Quite right. You are, as ever, my lodestar in this world of tit and tumult.

SLEEVES:

I live to serve, Your Grace. Shall I inform Lady Knickersley you'll be indisposed until your erection submits?

C.UNT.:

Yes, please do. And tell Lord Bumblethatch I shan't be attending fencing. My sabre is already fully engaged.

SLEEVES:

Very good, sir.

Sleeves gives the briefest nod, turns, and glides away, the door clicking shut with the discretion of a seasoned accomplice.

INT. DUKE OF UNTOR'S BEDROOM – *STILL* MORNING, NOW EVEN MORE ALARMING

No sooner has the door closed than it opens again with an apologetic swoosh. ***SLEEVES*** *reappears, carrying not a tray this time, but the slight look of a man delivering a telegram he dearly wishes was not his to bear.*

SLEEVES:

Awfully sorry to disturb Your Grace again, but it has come to my attention that your cousin—Lady Stella—is requesting an appointment with—

STELLA (exploding past him like a West End chorus girl in heat):
Cousin! I'm here to **masturbate you!**

C.UNT. (blinking violently):
Beg your pard—*what like… what?*

SLEEVES (already performing a half-turn of aristocratic disengagement):
I believe I'd best leave **family matters** to be, Your Grace.

He retreats with the grace of a man who has witnessed incestuous chaos before and kept the linen folded. The door closes with a soft click that somehow implies, "This is not my payscale."

STELLA (striking a pose by the fireplace):
Now, let's get that Old Untor blood pumping, shall we?

C.UNT. (still in bed, one eye twitching):
I say, Stella, is this still part of the Empire's decline?

STELLA:
Darling, *you* are the Empire. I'm just here to salute the flag.

INT. DUKE OF UNTOR'S BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER, NOW THOROUGHLY INAPPROPRIATE

C.UNT. has retreated up the headboard like a fox cornered by lingerie. ***STELLA*** *stands at the foot of the bed, monologuing like Lady Macbeth after two sherries and a strong gin.*

STELLA:
I've just learnt **jacking-off manoeuvres**, you see. Practised many times.
Many friends at school. You know the drill, old

chap. Wrists, rhythm, eye contact, occasional use of the Queen's anthem.

C.UNT. blinks as though trapped in a very specific parliamentary nightmare.

STELLA (charging ahead):
Got quite good at it. Some said "gifted," others just wept silently. But then—*then* it hit me! Like a dart, you know? An epiphany, they call it.

She begins pacing like a detective in a BBC4 adaptation.

What has my poor C.Unt. cousin always manifested? **Stiffness. Uneasiness. General unrest in the trouser district.**

So I thought, what can *I* do for my beloved blood relation, my flesh-and-flesh?

C.UNT. (terrified whisper):

I'm hoping the answer is "make tea."

STELLA:

No, silly! *Jack him off*, of course!

She beams, arms wide, as if expecting applause or a sash from the Queen.

C.UNT.:

Stella… darling… sweet, ambitious Stella… this is *unorthodox*. Even by our family standards.

Beat.

STELLA:

Well I didn't come here to knit, Cousin.

C.UNT.:

I rather wish you had.

Just outside the door, ***SLEEVES*** *stands absolutely motionless, expression blank,*

listening with the stoicism of a man who has once again updated the family scandal chart.

INT. DUKE OF UNTOR'S BEDROOM – THE CREAM-COLOURED APOCALYPSE

STELLA, sleeves rolled up like a World War nurse preparing to treat shell shock—or cause it—kneels before her noble cousin with the ***zeal of a taboo enthusiast*** *and the hand strength of a well-trained fencer.*

STELLA:

So off with the pants and latchery, dear cousin. Face the pleasure.

C.UNT. (horrified, aroused, deeply British):

Dear, your father and mine are brothers.

STELLA:

One *more* reason to piss them off. Now, give it here.

*She **grabs** it like she's reeling in a particularly irritable trout.*

C.UNT.:

Now easy, shall we—?

*Too late. She **begins stroking**, a rhythm so precise it may have been taught by a Viennese maestro.*

C.UNT.:

Oooooh… now I *get* it.

STELLA:

Yes, dear cousin. Let it go.

C.UNT.:

It might be quite… abundant.

STELLA:

One more reason. To *let it go.*

C.UNT. (eyes rolling back like a Victorian chandelier on dodgy wiring):

Oh dear—*it comes*. Cousin, this is the moment of family love… I… *I love you*—

—And then the ***jet fires****. Not a stream. Not a squirt. A* ***hydraulic ejaculation event****. Like a* ***Victorian firehose powered by incest and Gewürztraminer.***

STELLA is **launched backward**, hitting the **wall with a soggy thud**, legs akimbo, face glazed like a pâtisserie window.

The **walls**, once dignified in their wallpapered restraint, are now **liberally glazed in Untor semen**, which drips, **plinks**, and **sloshes** with orchestral audacity.

The **ceiling** weeps. The **floor** swims.

From outside the door:
SLEEVES (deadpan, faintly heard, shoes

squelching as he steps back):
squish-sguish... squish-sguish...

A beat.

SLEEVES (murmuring to himself):
And with that, Volume XIII gets its climax.

INT. DUKE OF UNTOR'S BEDROOM – POST-SPLOOGE CARNAGE

The air hangs heavy with the scent of ancestral shame and citrus notes from the Gewürztraminer. A single ***drop*** *detaches from the chandelier and* ***plinks*** *into a teacup with melancholy grace.*

STELLA, slowly peeling herself off the cum-glazed wall, hair matted like a Victorian lace curtain after a hurricane of spunk, surveys the battlefield.

STELLA:

So… that was mostly overdue.

C.UNT. (half-limp, half-proud, wholly dazed):

I might've held back a while. Roughly since the coronation of Edward VII.

STELLA (wiping gobs off her lashes, blinking like a sticky cherub):

Sleeves, the *emergency cum kit*, if you please.

A long, dignified pause. Then:

SLEEVES (from beyond the door, ever serene):

I shall alert the palace help, mylady. Full protocol. Mop division. Tarp deployment. Papal blessing, if required.

STELLA (dripping but composed):

And one of those little lemon-scented hand wipes. My nostrils feel... colonised.

C.UNT. (adjusting the covers, dreamily):
It's strange. I feel lighter. Like I've exorcised a ghost. A ghost made entirely of semen.

SLEEVES (re-entering discreetly, holding a lacquered box monogrammed "C.E.M.K."):
The Crisis Ejaculate Management Kit, sir.

C.UNT.:
Thank you, Sleeves. You've seen me through revolts, orgies, and that time with the Hungarian ambassador's wife. But this… this was family.

SLEEVES (bowing slightly):
Indeed, Your Grace. And I believe, for once, *all in the family*.

INT. NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM – MODERN, DISMAL, BONERED

NICHOLAS jolts upright in bed, sheets twisted like a rejected screenplay. Waking up from a dream about British ejaculation. His cock stands proud, alone, and bitter. The room smells faintly of last night's despair and cinnamon protein bars. Then—

STEPMOTHER (appearing at the door in suspiciously sheer silk):
Ooooh, I see you've got an erection… let me take care of that.

NICHOLAS (pulling the duvet up like a chastity shield):
Madam, I have told you multiple times: you are dating my father, and *that* is the entire scope of our relationship.

STEPMOTHER (pouting with all the dignity of a flaccid Pornhub plot):
But you walked in on me having a shower.

NICHOLAS:

Madam, I *mostly* did not, and what you posted on your OnlyFans was a **montage**, featuring three different bath tiles and a close-up of a grapefruit.

STEPMOTHER:

I got stuck in the washing machine and you—

NICHOLAS (firmly):

—*Madam*, I will not even address that pitiful attempt at narrative loophole-fucking. I've read Kafka. That's *not* how entrapment works.

STEPMOTHER (sidling closer, practically in slow motion):

But your erection…

NICHOLAS (grabbing a sock with grim determination):

I will drain it myself, thank you very much. No dialogue. No plot twist. No step-anything.

He points to the hallway like a general dismissing a dishonourable discharge.

NICHOLAS:

Now, if you could kindly retire to your quarters. With. My. *Father.*

A long, awkward pause. Then:

STEPMOTHER:

You're no fun. Just like your mother.

NICHOLAS:

Exactly.

She retreats. The door closes. Nicholas sighs, reaches for a box of tissues and Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil. The sound of vigorous self-exorcism begins.

INT. NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM – POST-REJECTION, POST-ERECTION, MID-EXISTENTIAL CRISIS

Nicholas lies back, towel over his loins, sweat on his brow, dignity still flailing somewhere near the radiator.

NICHOLAS (staring at the ceiling like it owes him an explanation):
That dream... about the English-speaking funny…
It was absurd. Perverse. Witty.
Honestly, kind of brilliant.

He shifts slightly, the bed creaking in agreement.

NICHOLAS:
How great would it be to have a **butler**…
Someone to glide in and say things like,
"May I suggest a firm wank followed by toast, sir?"

He sighs.

NICHOLAS (cont'd):

And why do I suddenly crave a **pomegranate**?

A beat.

NICHOLAS:

Symbol of fertility? Subconscious metaphor? Biblical reference? Or did I just watch *Call Me by Your Name* too late in life?

He glances at his phone. It's open to a paused Pornhub tab with the title: "Stepmom Gets Stuck in Washing Machine Again 😳"

NICHOLAS:

Maybe I just need potassium.

INT. NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM – THE SANCTUM OF SOLO RESOLVE

Nicholas sits at the edge of his bed, trousers defeated around his ankles, eyes filled with that

quiet, heroic resolve reserved for lone cowboys and self-pleasuring intellectuals.

NICHOLAS:

Well… this cock isn't going to wank itself.

With the solemnity of a monk preparing for flagellation—or perhaps celebration—he sits on his left hand. The room falls silent, save for the faint hum of modern alienation and a distant dog barking at nothing.

He stares at the wall. He waits.

NICHOLAS (softly):

The Mysterious Hand…

After a few minutes, the tingling begins. The magic awakens. He lifts the limb reverently, like Arthur drawing Excalibur from a numb wrist.

NICHOLAS:

Ah yes. Just detached enough to feel like a stranger, just familiar enough to know what I like.

He begins. It's not elegant. It's not glamorous. But it's efficient, like a bureaucrat in the Ministry of Semen.

NICHOLAS (moaning, softly):

Oh darling… tell me again about your PhD in Comparative Literature...

He gasps, the mysterious hand moving with the finesse of a ghost who's just remembered they were horny.

NICHOLAS (cont'd):

Yes… *mysterious hand*, take me… to the threshold of shame and self-satisfaction...

And just before release—

NICHOLAS (gasping):

Wait… why am I imagining the butler?

A beat. He shrugs.

NICHOLAS:

Well. Can't sack him if he's not hired.

He finishes with a muted grunt, grabs a tissue, and reaches for his pomegranate-flavoured sparkling water.

INT. LIVING ROOM – EARLY AFTERNOON, PORNHUB STANDARD LIGHTING

NICHOLAS walks in, freshly drained, hopeful for a sandwich and perhaps a moment of moral peace. Instead, he is met with ***pornographic tableau #37****:*

A GIRL lounges on the couch, legs already akimbo like a faulty umbrella. She ***pulls aside***

her panties *with the grace of a woman who's never said the word "boundaries."*

GIRL:

Oh *no*, stepbrother! You walked in on me touching myself! Now you **have to help**...

NICHOLAS freezes. Sighs. Removes his glasses with the weary precision of a man who's been through this scene at least four times this month.

NICHOLAS:

Miss, you don't even **live** here. You live with your **father**, who—might I remind you—got **full custody** during the divorce. *(And that, frankly, says a lot about your mother.)*

GIRL (unfazed, still circling the drain):

It's **visit weekend**.

NICHOLAS:

It is **Wednesday**. It is *not* visit weekend. I have your **visit calendar notarized**.

He pulls a laminated tri-fold from his pocket like a bureaucratic gunslinger.

NICHOLAS (reading):

Next scheduled visitation: *Second Saturday of the month*. Supervised. Between the hours of **2 p.m. and moral decency**.

GIRL:

You're so hot when you're administrative.

NICHOLAS:

You're on thin ice, and I have **witness statements.**

GIRL:

But stepbrother, I'm *so stuck emotionally*—

NICHOLAS:

Out. Of. My. House.

A long pause. She pulls her panties back up with exaggerated sadness, stands, and exits through the kitchen muttering something about "kink-shaming in this economy."

Nicholas pours himself a cup of tea. Adds a splash of oat milk. Stares into the void.

NICHOLAS (to no one):

I really do need a butler.

INT. NICHOLAS'S FOYER – MIDDAY, MILD EXISTENTIAL EXHAUSTION

The doorbell rings with its usual cheery ***bing-bong****, a sound Nicholas now associates with chaos in yoga pants.*

He opens the door.

Standing before him is a **towering African American gentleman**, built like a Renaissance sculpture that bench-presses Volvos. He wears a **fedora**, a tasteful **sports blazer**, **polished loafers**, and carries a **leather bag** that clearly contains either **condoms, cologne, or divine retribution.**

GENTLEMAN (touches hat with perfect decorum):
Good morning.
I am *The Bull*.
I'm here to fornicate a lady and make her husband a cuckold.

NICHOLAS (sighs, then facepalms):
Of course you are.

A beat.

NICHOLAS (gesturing inside with a weary arm):

Upstairs. Second door on the right. You'll hear the sound of stepmotherly desperation and Barry White.

GENTLEMAN (touches hat again, deeply respectful):
Much obliged.

He enters with the grace of a professional. The house seems to adjust itself to his presence. Somewhere, a painting straightens.

NICHOLAS (already pulling out his phone):
Right. Uber. Preferably with **reinforced seats** and **a driver who doesn't ask questions**.

He taps his screen furiously, mumbling under his breath.

NICHOLAS:
I need to get out before she offers to "help me with my emotional baggage." Again.

A notification pings:

Your driver, Antonio, is 2 minutes away. He has tissues, snacks, and an understanding smile.

NICHOLAS (muttering):

God bless Antonio.

INT. UBER – MOVING THROUGH MODERN DREAD

Nicholas sits stiffly in the backseat, clutching his phone like it's a crucifix and this ride is demonic possession. The seats smell faintly of regret and air freshener labelled "Alaska Breeze."

NICHOLAS (forcing it):

So, Antonio… how's the Uber business?

ANTONIO (a man with tragic eyes and the soul of a musical):

Ah, *nada bien*, señor. No good.

NICHOLAS:

Oh. Sorry to hear that.

ANTONIO (gaze distant, heart elsewhere):

Sí, señor. *Yo nunca quise ser conductor de Uber.*

Yo quería ser… un leñador.

NICHOLAS (blinking):

I'm sorry, Antonio, my Spanish is frozen at an embarrassing C-minus from middle school.

ANTONIO (nodding with the solemnity of a Shakespearean ghost):

Eh, señor… I no wanted to drive Uber.

I wanted to be… how you say in inglés…

I wanted to be... *A LUMBERJACK!*

NICHOLAS:

(facepalm)

But of course you did. This is an *Alba Pratalia* book.

I was wondering when **Monty Python** would pop up.

ANTONIO (suddenly enraptured, eyes alight, hands momentarily off the wheel):

¡Saltando de árbol en árbol!

¡Mientras flotan por los caudalosos ríos de la Columbia Británica!

¡La gigantesca secuoya, el alerce, el abeto, el imponente pino silvestre!

¡El majestuoso cerezo en flor, el pequeño y valiente álamo temblón!

¡El cojeante canguro de Nigeria!

¡La imponente acacia de Aldershot!

¡La llorona vírgola!

¡El travieso roble centelleante de Leicestershire!

¡El flatulento olmo de West Ruislip!

¡El Quercus Maximus Bamber Gascoigni!

¡El Epigillus! ¡El trueque Hughius Greenus!

Suddenly, as if choreographed by divine absurdity, ***two other Ubers*** *roll up alongside, one left, one right—****windows down****, drivers in plaid.*

UBER DRIVERS IN UNISON (chanting joyfully):

¡Es leñador y está bien!

¡Duerme toda la noche y trabaja todo el día!

Antonio joins the chorus, pounding the steering wheel rhythmically as pedestrians look on in horror, delight, and confusion.

NICHOLAS (sinking lower in his seat):

Please crash this car. I can't live like this anymore.

ANTONIO (beaming):

But señor! Soon we cut down trees, wear high heels, suspenders, and a bra!

INT. UBER – RED LIGHT, SUSPENSE, AND THEN ABSURDITY

The car jerks to a gentle stop at the red light. Antonio drums the wheel lightly, still basking in post-lumberjack euphoria.

ANTONIO (turning to Nicholas with a knowing grin):
You didn't expect *this*, eh, señor?

NICHOLAS (exhausted, trying to reclaim some version of reality):
No, Antonio. I didn't expect—

He freezes. Eyes widen. One hand rises to his mouth.

NICHOLAS:
Oh no. No no no no—

[JARRING ORGAN CHORD – BAM!]

Suddenly, as if summoned by the dark magic of over-referenced British comedy, the ***car doors burst open.***

CARDINAL XIMINEZ enters through the left rear.
CARDINAL BIGGLES dives in through the front window like an angry cherub.
CARDINAL FANG just walks in through the unlocked right rear like a man who's done this before.

All three wear **the full red regalia**, **Latino features**, and **a level of theatrical menace usually reserved for flash mobs in cathedral gift shops.**

XIMINEZ (shouting):
¡*NADIE ESPERA A LA INQUISICIÓN ESPAÑOLA!*
¡Nuestra principal arma es la sorpresa!

¡Sorpresa y miedo!

¡Miedo y sorpresa!

BIGGLES:

Nuestra dos armas…

XIMINEZ (interrupting):

¡Nuestras *tres* armas son: miedo, sorpresa, y eficacia despiadada!

FANG:

Y una devoción *casi fanática* al Papa.

XIMINEZ (realizing):

¡Nuestras *cuatro*… no! ¡*Entre* nuestras armas…!

Se encuentran elementos como: el miedo, la sorpresa…

Olvídenlo.

¡Volveré!

They all dramatically exit the car just as the light turns green.

NICHOLAS (staring ahead, numb):
There was trouble at the mill, wasn't there?

ANTONIO (nodding gravely):
Sí, señor. *Una de las vigas transversales se ha torcido sobre el pedal.*

A long beat.

NICHOLAS:
You know what? Just take me to the library.

ANTONIO:
But señor… we are already *in* the Index of Forbidden Books.

INT. MUNICIPAL LIBRARY – MID-AFTERNOON, ECHOING WITH LITERARY DESPAIR

NICHOLAS approaches the front desk like a trench soldier begging for rations, eyes bloodshot, soul gently slipping.

NICHOLAS:

I'm living an absurd day. Give me something absurd.

LIBRARIAN (cheerfully anemic):

Certainly, sir. What would you like?

NICHOLAS:

Well, eh··· how about Beckett's *Godot*?

LIBRARIAN:

Oh, I'm afraid we're **fresh out of Beckett**, sir.

NICHOLAS:

Oh. Never mind. How are you on Camus?

LIBRARIAN:

I'm afraid we never have that at the end of the week, sir. We get it fresh on Monday.

NICHOLAS:

Sartre?

LIBRARIAN:

Out. Existential shipment delayed at customs.

NICHOLAS:

Ionesco?

LIBRARIAN:

Only in Braille. And burnt.

NICHOLAS:

Pinter?

LIBRARIAN:

Out of print, sir. He paused and never came back.

NICHOLAS:

I see. Albee?

LIBRARIAN:

Albanian translation only, sir. Water-damaged.

NICHOLAS:

Pirandello?

LIBRARIAN:

Ah! Had six characters earlier. Lost them. Still searching.

NICHOLAS:

Foucault?

LIBRARIAN:

Vanished in a footnote.

NICHOLAS:

Kafka?

LIBRARIAN:

Yes, but the catalogue entry turned into a bug and now no one can file it.

NICHOLAS:

Cioran?

LIBRARIAN:

Oh no sir, we keep that locked. Health and safety regulations.

NICHOLAS:

Nietzsche?

LIBRARIAN:

Self-deconstructed in the Philosophy aisle last Thursday.

NICHOLAS:

Thomas Bernhard?

LIBRARIAN:

We *did,* but someone borrowed it and **refused to return it out of spite**.

NICHOLAS:

Right. Well. Do you *have* any books?

LIBRARIAN (perky):

Of course, sir. It's a library, sir.

NICHOLAS:

(pause)

You're *completely bookless*, aren't you?

LIBRARIAN (beaming):

Oh no, sir. We have a full signed set of *Eat, Pray, Love*.

NICHOLAS (shudders):

I'd rather read Proust in Morse code.

INT. MUNICIPAL LIBRARY – THE "OBSCURE PHILOSOPHY" AISLE – DIMLY LIT, FAINT SMELL OF PAPER AND SIN

NICHOLAS roams the aisle like a man hunting meaning or at least a book with a climax. His fingers trail across cracked spines—Deleuze, Bataille, the complete works of Hegel, still wrapped in plastic out of sheer decency.

Then he stops. Blinks.

There, at the base of a dusty shelf labelled "SØREN KIERKEGAARD – THE ANGSTY YEARS", a girl crouches, reaching into the shadows, rear gloriously elevated, skirt hiked up in flagrant disregard for structural integrity.

Above her, floating in midair in tacky, translucent Arial font, the words appear:

SEXY LIBRARIAN GETS STUCK UNDER KIERKEGAARD

Nicholas cocks an eyebrow.

The girl wiggles slightly. A faint, clearly unnecessary “oof!” escapes her lips.

She is, in no meaningful sense, stuck.

Nicholas sighs with the resigned pragmatism of a man too used to being the straight man in a collapsing vaudeville orgy.

NICHOLAS:

Well… since she isn't my step-anything…

[UNZIIIIIP]

A bold and unclassifiable work of contemporary literature, Mala Tempora Currunt explores the collapse of meaning in a world saturated with performance, desire, and absurdity. Blending elements of theatre, pornography, philosophical dialogue, and farce, Alba Pratalia constructs a narrative where characters confront the emptiness of modern culture with wit, erotic excess, and relentless self-awareness. From a derailed staging of Beckett to the sterile aisles of IKEA, from aristocratic decay to algorithm-driven desire, this is a darkly comic meditation on identity, language, and the rituals we invent to fill the void. Unflinching, transgressive, and deeply intelligent, Mala Tempora Currunt is a tragicomedy for the end of meaning.